



# Arizona Department of Agriculture

1688 W. Adams Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85007  
(602) 542-4373 FAX (602) 542-5420

## ***PRESS RELEASE***

### ***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

**RELEASE DATE:** May 3, 2005

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Katie Decker, 602-542-0958

## **First Case of West Nile Virus Found In A Horse This Year**

(Phoenix, AZ) -- The first case of West Nile Virus found in a horse this year was discovered in Mesa, Arizona. The case was first confirmed April 20, 2005. The animal was euthanized. Last year, 109 cases were discovered in horses in Arizona. West Nile affects horses much more often than any other domestic animals. Many horses infected with West Nile do not develop any illness, but of horses that become ill about one-third die or need to be euthanized. Other livestock and poultry do not commonly show any illness if infected with West Nile. Below are some common questions about the West Nile in horses.

### **How do horses become infected with West Nile virus?**

The same way humans become infected-by the bite of infectious mosquitoes. The mosquitoes become infected after feeding on an infected bird. Mosquitoes cannot get West Nile virus from an infected horse.

### **Has West Nile virus caused severe illness or death in horses?**

Following transmission by an infected mosquito, West Nile virus, may cause a mild transient self resolving fever or it may infect the brain causing inflammation or "encephalitis". The vast majority of horses that are bitten by infected mosquitoes do not become ill, but those that develop severe encephalitis often die.

### **Can I get infected with West Nile virus by caring for an infected horse?**

West Nile virus is transmitted by infectious mosquitoes. The infected horse is not contagious to humans or to other horses. Normal infection control precautions should be followed when caring for a sick horse.

### **Can a horse infected with West Nile virus infect horses in neighboring stalls?**

No. There is no documented evidence that West Nile virus is transmitted between horses.

###